

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of an Office Action dated April 7, 2005. In this response Applicants have cancelled claim 54, incorporating the subject matter of claim 54 into independent claim 51, and have amended the dependency of claim 55 to take into account the cancellation of claim 54 and amendment to claim 51. In addition, Applicants have amended claim 56 for consistency with amended claim 51. Claim 29 has been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer and the dependency of claim 47 has been amended to take into account the cancellation of claim 29. Finally, Applicants have amended withdrawn claim 24 so that it now depends from claim 51. Rejoinder and consideration of previously withdrawn claims 24-28, 30 and 47-50, all of which ultimately depend from claim 51, is respectfully requested.

Following entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 24-28, 30, and 47-57 are pending in the application.

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the remarks which follow.

Statement of Substance of Personal Interview

As an initial matter, Applicants wish to thank SPE Housel and Examiner Brown for the courtesies extended to Mr. Strain and Dr. Sethuraman during a personal interview conducted on August 30, 2005. During the interview, claim amendments incorporating the subject matter of claim 54 into claim 51 were discussed as well as the possibility of rejoinder of non-elected claims if the claims were amended to depend upon amended claim 51. Applicants also presented and discussed certain documents cited in the Information Disclosure Statement submitted herewith.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge, with appreciation, the PTO's indication, on page 4 of the Office Action, that claims 54 and 55 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In this response, Applicants have amended independent claim 51, from which claim 54 directly depended, to incorporate the subject matter of claim 54. In view of this amendment, Applicants submit that claim 51 and the claims depending therefrom are now in *prima facie* allowable form.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

On page 2 of the Office Action, the PTO has rejected claims 51-53, 56, and 57 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Roberts in view of U.S. Patent 5,232,840 to Olins.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the PTO has rejected claims 51-53 and 56 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Smith.

As discussed above, Applicants have amended independent claim 51 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 54 which the PTO indicated as being allowable if presented in independent form. In view of this amendment, Applicants submit that the rejections of claims 51-53, 56 and 57 are now moot.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. An early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions regarding the application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.